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DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

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# SECRETARY UDALL ASKS IF SWAMPS CAN REDEEM THE MODERN CITY

Warning that in the world of nature, paradise lost cannot be regained, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall asked last night (November 27) if even swamps can redeem the modern city.

In an address at a dinner meeting of the Great Swamp Committee of the North American Wildlife Foundation in Somerville, N. J., Secretary Udall cited the following problems of our cities and the people who live in them:

- (1) the superb feats of our architects and builders are largely nullified by a compounding of congestion and a further tainting of our air and water;

- (2) the expansion of the Atlantic Coast megalopolis means "growth", but it also means that asphalt and man-made things are daily diminishing the domain of nature;

- (3) even the new cultural gains of our cities are offset by an increase in noise and disruption which create new strains and conditions that are basically hostile to a life-giving environment.

"In other words," Secretary Udall said, "looked at in the round, our pattern of progress is a process of one step forward here and one step backward there, and to many of us it seems that over-all, our losses balance out our gains."

"No one but a Thoreau could have dreamed even 25 years ago of the significance that swamps and their values in wildlife and nature's freedom would assume in the minds and hearts of city-bound modern man," Secretary Udall said. "It is perhaps because more each day sensitive men feel a need for the healing solitude of nature."

"Here in New Jersey--in this hub of commerce where people are crowded more densely than anywhere in the United States--you have had the foresight to dedicate 2,081 acres of your precious land to its highest use--perpetuation in its natural state."

The Great Swamp Committee of the North American Wildlife Foundation is working to preserve the "Great Swamp" which stretches across 15 square miles of north central New Jersey. The Committee has to date purchased 2,000 acres and donated them to the Department of the Interior for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

"The dedication of this seacoast lowland not only preserves a unique and valuable area, but demonstrates that people are learning to see with the eye of the poet, rather than just the ardor of the builder and the conqueror of nature," Secretary Udall said. "For it takes the modern eye to see the miracles of life in the woodlands and bogs of the Great Swamp where too many of our forefathers would have seen only a challenge to man's ingenuity in changing and controlling nature.

"We are learning that the search of modern, urban man is not for new ways to conquer nature--but for ways to save the beauty of the out-of-doors so that to use Robert Frost's words, man can gain new insight from 'country things.'"

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